

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 03349 131429Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 PC-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /168 W

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R 131330Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5533

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3349

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, UY

SUBJ: POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT

AND MILITARY, II

CINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MVD 3331

1. SUMMARY: LATEST CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT BORDABERRY AND ELEMENTS OF MILITARY APPEARS TO HAVE SUBSIDED WITH SWEARING IN ON NOVEMBER 12 OF ECHEVARRIA LEUNDA TO SALTO GRANDE COMMISSION. ALTHOUGH BORDABERRY'S WILL PREDOMINATED, HIS PRESIDENCY IS NOT STRENGTHENED BY ANY CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY WHICH IS SIMULTANEOUSLY HIS MAJOR BASE OF SUPPORT AND MAJOR THREAT TO HIS CONTINUATION IN OFFICE.

2. JORGE ECHEVARRIA LEUNDA WAS SWORN IN MORNING OF NOVEMBER 12 AS HEAD OF URUGAYAN DELEGATION TOMIXED TECHNICAL COMMISSION OF SALTO GRANDE. FONMIN BLANCO'S REMARKS AT CEREMONY REITERATED GOU'S FAITH IN ECHEVARRIA AND MADE CLEAR BLANCO'S CLOSE PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT FOR HIM.

3. ECHEVARRIA SPENT THE WEEKEND IN SEMI-HIDING, SLEEPING AT THE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MONTEV 03349 131429Z

HOME OF FRIENDS BUT ALSO MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES, SUCH AS AT

CROWDED SUNDAY MASS. HE SAID THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS HE WAS BEING SOUGHT OR EVEN FOLLOWED. CONSEQUENTLY, WE NOW INCLINED TO BELIEVE SOME ELEMENTS OF MILITARY HAD CIRCULATED RUMORS ABOUT SEARCHING FOR HIM EITHER TO SEE HOW FAR PRESIDENT BORDABERRY WOULD GO IN STANDING UP FOR HIM OR TO FRIGHTEN ECHEVARRIA SO HE WOULD EITHER FLEE OR NOT ACCEPT SALTO GRAND POSITION.

4. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY (WITH RUMORS CENTERING ON GENERAL GREGORIO ALVAREZ, CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF AND OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT, AND GENERAL ESTEBAN CRISTI, FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER) DIFFERED WITH CINCS ON ECHEVARRIA MATTER AS THE FORMER ARE SEEKING MILITARY VETO OVER FUTURE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS AND, PERHAPS, BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN EXPECTING THAT RETIRED GENERAL MARIO AGUERRONDO WOULD OBTAIN PRESIDENCY SALTO GRANDE COMMISSION.

5. UNLESS ECHEVARRIA DETAINED AGAIN, WHICH SEEM UNLIKELY, IT APPEARS THAT BORDABERRY CAME OUT ON TOP IN THIS CASE. NEVERTHELESS, EVERY CONFRONTATION WITH MILITARY LEADERS PROBABLY SERVES TO WEAKEN, RATHER THAN STRENGTHEN, HIS POSITION. SIRACUSA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, MILITARY PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MONTEV03349
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731137/aaaabbhv.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MVD 3331
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <14 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND MILITARY, II
TAGS: PINS, PINT, UY, (ECHEVARRIA LEUNDA, JORGE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005